

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend the Claims as follows:

1. (Currently Amended) A method for preparation of a food sauce, said method comprising the steps of:
 - a) hydrating low-methoxyl pectin in water to form an aqueous pectin solution ~~containing substantially no calcium~~;
 - b) heating a liquid fraction to at least 140°F;
 - c) after said hydrating step a), mixing said aqueous pectin solution of step a) with said heated liquid fraction of step b), wherein said liquid fraction comprises soluble calcium in the range of 20-100 milligrams of calcium per gram of pectin in said aqueous pectin solution; and
 - d) adding a fruit component to the mixture obtained from step c), wherein said fruit component is maintained in the mixture at a temperature below which cooking of the fruit component will occur.
2. (Original) The method of Claim 1 wherein the aqueous pectin solution of step a) is maintained at a temperature of about 140°F to about 170°F.
3. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 1 wherein a thickener is mixed with the hydrated pectin prior to the mixing step c).
4. (Original) The method of Claim 3 wherein the thickener comprises xanthan.

5. (Original) The method of Claim 3 wherein the ratio by weight of thickener to pectin is about 1:4 to about 1:7.
6. (Original) The method of Claim 1 wherein the liquid fraction of step b) further comprises a juice concentrate.
7. (Original) The method of Claim 1 wherein the liquid fraction of step b) further comprises a fruit puree.
8. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 1 wherein the mixing step c) occurs at a temperature above the gelation temperature of the pectin in solution and continues until the mixture formed therefrom attains a homogenous gritty or grainy appearance.
9. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 1 wherein the addition of the fruit at step d) reduces the temperature of the mixture to a point below which cooking of the fresh fruit will occur.
10. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 1 wherein the fruit added at step d) comprises a frozen fruit.

11. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 10 wherein the frozen fruit added at step d) comprises at least one frozen fruit component selected from a group of frozen fruits, said group comprising peaches, strawberries, blueberries, cranberries, raspberries, blackberries, pears, grapes, apples, pineapples, apricots, mangoes, cherries, kiwi, bananas, and papaya.
12. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 1 wherein the aqueous pectin solution is added to the liquid fraction at a ratio of gallons per minute of aqueous pectin solution added to agitation rate of the mixing in rpm of between 1:5 and 1:15.
13. (Original) A food sauce produced by the method of Claim 1.
14. (Currently Amended) A method for preparation of a food sauce, said method comprising the steps of:
 - a) hydrating low-methoxyl pectin in water;
 - b) after said hydrating of step a), mixing said aqueous solution of step a) with a liquid fraction at a controlled rate of both mixing and addition of aqueous solution to the liquid fraction, wherein said liquid fraction comprises soluble calcium; and
 - c) adding a plurality of food pieces to the mixture attained from step b)[c)], wherein said addition of said food pieces reduces the temperature of the mixture, and wherein further the food pieces are maintained in the mixture below a temperature at which cooking of said food pieces will occur.

15. (Original) The method of Claim 14 wherein the food pieces added at step c) comprise fruit.
16. (Original) The method of Claim 15 wherein said fruit comprises frozen fruit.
17. (Original) The method of Claim 14 wherein the addition of the food pieces at step c) reduces the temperature of the mixture to a point below which the cooking of said food pieces will occur.
18. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 14 wherein the controlled rate of both mixing and addition of the aqueous solution to the liquid fraction comprises a ratio of addition of gallons per minute of aqueous pectin solution to an agitation rate in rpm of between 1:5 and 1:15.
19. (Original) A food sauce produced by the method of Claim 14.

20. (Original) A food sauce produced by a method comprising the steps of:

- a) hydrating a low-methoxyl pectin in an aqueous solution;
- b) mixing a thickener with the aqueous pectin solution;
- c) mixing said aqueous solution of step b) with a liquid fraction, wherein said liquid fraction comprises calcium; and
- d) adding a fruit component to the mixture attained from step c), wherein the fruit component is maintained in the mixture at a temperature below which cooking of the fruit component will occur.

21. (Original) The food sauce of Claim 20 wherein the fruit component added at step d) comprises at least one frozen fruit component selected from a group of frozen fruits, said group comprising peaches, strawberries, blueberries, cranberries, raspberries, blackberries, pears, grapes, apples, pineapples, mangoes, cherries, kiwi, bananas, and papaya.